World Views

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Study Guide for the Final Examination

Our final exam, which is worth some big chunk of the grade for the whole course, will cover everything we’ve looked at from the very beginning of the semester. It will include a section of multiple-choice questions, some short-statement questions, and a selection of critical questions.

General concepts

* Definitions
* Sources (ie. questions, intellectual environments, limit situations)
* Framing Languages
* Schweitzer’s criteria
* Civilization: the ‘big’ and ‘small’ pictures

Confucianism

* The Mandate of Heaven
* The idea that the world has written on it, a moral code
* Humanity and Righteousness
* Everyone must have these things to be a good person. Empathy, compassion, etc.
* The Five Relations
* Parent to child
* Husband and wife
* Friend to friend
* Rule to minister
* Elder sibling to young sibling
* Filial Piety
* A virtue of respect for one’s parents, elders and ancestors
* The Rectification of Names
* Idea that words are important, names are important. We should say things as they are instead of beating around the bush for sake of better clarity and understanding.
* The Sage Gentleman
* The sum of someone who follows all of the major concepts of Confucianism. A “truly civilized person”.

Taoism

* The Tao
* Naturalness, Spontaneity, Gong-Fu
* Taoism is a teaching of how to live in harmony with nature, other people and within yourself.
* Spontaneity
* Gong-fu is the idea of mastery over an art or skill
* Emptiness / Wu-Wei
* Acting in a way that is as natural as possible. Often associated with taking the path of least resistance and translates literally into non-action or non-doing.

**Hinduism**

\* Atman

* The higher self.

\* Brahman

* The ultimate unity of the world and metaphysical name of all things.

\* Samsara, Karma, and Moksha

* Moksha: Liberation from suffering.
* Karma: The way in which one’s actions produce consequences for who you are, and what your ‘destiny’ will be
* Samsara:

\* Dharma

* Dharma:

\* The veil of Maya



\* The caste system

* Brahmins: The priestly caste, between man and god. Incarnation of Dharma.
* Kshatriyas: The warrior class who protect the people
* Vaisyas: The merchant and peasant class
* Shudras: The labor class, whose only duty is to serve the 3 upper castes

Buddhism

* Major events in the life of Siddartha Gautama
* Before he was born he was predicted to be either a deeply religious man, or a great warrior king, like his father.
* Grew up surrounded by influence to become a warrior. Never permitted to leave his father’s palace until the age of 7.
* First time he left, he saw death of small animals and then the others eat the dead, became aware of the circle of life.
* Got married and has a son, still only having left the castle that one time.
* Around 30yrs old, gets his parents to let him out, so they arrange everything in the village to be perfect when he leaves.
* He sees 4 things when out in the village that shape him.
* A sick man stumbling around, so the charioteer taught him about disease.
* Saw and old man, so the charioteer taught him about the inevitability of old age.
* Saw a dead man, so the charioteer taught him about the inevitability of death.

^^^ These are the canonical 3 things he saw.

* Saw a homeless Hindi man. Charioteer told him it was a holy man seeking the solution to suffering.
* The Four Noble Truths
* Life is suffering
* Suffering is caused by attachment
* Suffering can be ended by non-attachment
* Follow the eight-fold path:
* Right views
* Right intentions
* Right speech
* Right action
* Right livelihood
* Right effort
* Right mindfulness
* Right concentration

^^^ Don’t need to know these 8, just included them to be thorough

* The doctrine of ‘no-soul’
* A fundamental concept saying there is no soul. Humans aren’t made up of some underlying substance. This is one of the big differences between Hinduism and Buddhism. The Hindu believe in the ‘Atman’.
* Samsara and Nirvana
* Samsara: The cycle of life/death, birth/rebirth
* Nirvana: The escape from the cycle of Samsara. Ultimate enlightenment and goal of any Buddhist.

The Bible: Christianity, Judaism

* Origins and nature of the text
* The doctrine of Original Sin
* The idea that people are born sinful and that Jesus died for our sins. He redeemed the sins of all of humanity.
* Idea comes from the story of Adam and Eve where Eve takes the apple from the tree that God told them not to touch and eats it, then they get kicked out of the Garden of Eden.
* The Covenant
* Literally, a contract. In the bible, an agreement between God and his people, in which God makes promises to his people and, usually, requires certain conduct from them. In the old testament, God made agreements from Noah, Abraham and Moses.
* The “Good News”: Salvation and Redemption
* The ‘Good New’ mean Gospel
* Salvation: Saving the soul from sin and death.
* Redemption:
* Faith
* Various teachings about social justice, from the Old and New Testaments

Islam

* Major events in the life of Muhammed
* The Five Pillars
* Other important concepts: Walayah, Tahwid, Jihad, etc.
* Articles of faith
* The Koranic Challenge
* Various teachings about morality and justice

Aristotle

* The Four Causes
* Aristotle’s argument(s) concerning human nature

Three branches of Greek thought after Aristotle

* Neoplatonism
* Epicureanism
* Stoicism

The Enlightenment

* Major figures: Descartes, Newton, Diderot, Voltaire
* Significance of the Lisbon Earthquake
* Immanuel Kant’s essay “What is Enlightenment?”

Major concepts in economics

* Notes about mercantilism.
* Smith: various assumptions about human nature
* Smith: the ‘Invisible Hand’
* Smith: principles regarding taxation and government spending
* Marx: alienated labour
* Marx: fictitious capital
* Marx: commodity fetishism
* Marx: solutions to the above, described in the Communist Manifesto

Be prepared to answer one or more critical questions, such as:

* Choose any five of the world view studied in class. What is the problem with human life that it addresses? What is its solution to that problem? Does that problem/solution, in your rational judgment, meet Schweitzer’s criteria for an acceptable world view?
* Of the various world views studied in class so far, which do you think is the best suited to promote social justice? World peace? Wealth and prosperity? Meaning and human flourishing? And why?
* If you personally subscribe to one of the world views covered in class, which of the other world views offers the most rational and powerful counter-argument to your view? And why?

In relation to this critical question, remember to review your notes about what a world view is, and also the notes on good and bad thinking habits, from chapters 1 and 2 of Clear and Present Thinking.